

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Attached to this Amendment is an Information Disclosure Statement with a copy of the Search Report in the corresponding European Patent Application 05100737.5, corresponding to published European Patent Application 1,564,539. Listed on the attached Form 1449 are three references cited in the European Search Report and not currently of record in this U.S. patent application. The remaining references cited in the European Search Report are of record in this U.S. patent application. The references were cited in Category A as showing the technological background. The following comments are directed to the references cited in the Form 1449.

U.S. Patent 6,110,368 - This patent is directed to a filter assembly having the pleated porous filter element 3 shown in Figs. 7-9. The housing 2 surrounding the filter element 3 contains channels 29, as shown in Figs. 3 and 5b and 5c. The fluid to be filtered may be inputted in the center of the filter assembly and the filtered fluid passes through the filter to the inner wall of housing 2 for discharge from the filter assembly. Col. 9, lines 18-27 note that grooves on the inner wall may increase in cross section from the input end to the output end of the filter housing. See also Col. 22, lines 24-29. A configuration of the grooves is established to provide a desired pressure drop. See Col. 22 and Figs. 15, 20-22. See also Col. 23, lines 1-28. Col. 12, lines 10-15 describe a reversal of the normal flow direction through the filter assembly as "accidental" or "to flush" the assembly. See also Col. 23, lines 29-32.

To ensure that independent claim 22 fully distinguishes over this reference, the concluding portions of the claim have been amended in a manner similar to the amendment previously entered in claim 24 to describe the tapering of the output passage as being in an amount that generates similar gas profiles along the input and output passages. No such feature is taught or suggested by the '368 reference. Support for the amendment is found in page 9 of the specification, as filed, at lines 1-31.

Claim 24 has been amended in a minor respect to bring the concluding portions of the claim into conformity with the previous portions of the concluding paragraph which describe only the configuration of the input passage.

Appln. No. 10/780,123
Amendment dated July 17, 2007
Reply to Notice of Allowance of April 24, 2007

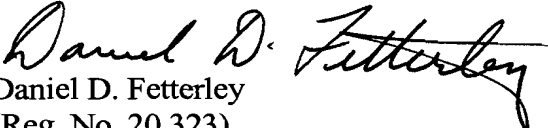
Published U.S. Patent Application 2002/0110924 - This patent shows an ultra pure water filter that separates a feed stream into a product stream and a concentrate stream in which the level of contaminants has been increased above the detection limits of available analyzers. The apparatus of Figs. 1, 2, 9, and 10 are described as "schematic" as in nature. See the Brief Description of the Drawings section of the published application. The concluding portions of amended claim 22 and allowed claim 24 are believed to clearly distinguish over this reference.

European Application 1,052,013 - This European patent application is understood to correspond to issued U.S. Patent 6,375,014 and shows a filter in which the permeability of the support varies in the direction of fluid flow. A wall of variable permeability is not contemplated in the invention of the present application.

Consideration of the foregoing references is respectfully requested and in view of the distinctions noted above, reissuance of the Notice of Allowance in this application with the amended claims is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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